

# Dennis Debbaudt's Autism Risk & Safety Newsletter

Spring, 2005

Please circulate far & wide!

I hope everyone is enjoying the April weather and *National  
Autism Awareness Month!!*

Dennis

**Here's what's up:**

**Table of contents:**

- First Ever U.S. Conference on Autism, Law Enforcement close to becoming a reality
- U. S. Department of Homeland Security hosts Autism Training Sessions at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) Response & Criminal Justice Issues
- Autism & Law Enforcement Video News
- Pensacola Police Department's *Take Me Home* Database

- When Words Are Not Enough: curriculum and video review
  - Global and Regional Asperger Syndrome Partnership
  - Autism Spectrum & Law Enforcement Training in Maine
  - Rising Bird Productions
  - *Dennis Debbaudt Calendar*
  - Now Booking Dennis Debbaudt Conference and Training Sessions
  - A personal note and THANKS!!
- 

## First Ever U.S. Conference on Autism, Law Enforcement, First Response & Criminal Justice Issues close to becoming a reality

I had a great deal of response out here about the proposed Autism, Law Enforcement and First Response conference. As a result, Dr. Lloyd Zucker, M.D. and A. Lynn Zucker, BSW, MHA put Dr. John Sullivan Director of Training & Professional Development, Boca Raton Police Services Department in touch with me regarding the conference. When John called, I explained to him the growing safety and risk needs autism families have, and how these needs affect 21st century law enforcement and first response communities. John in turn outlined the city of Boca Raton's new **INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT (ICLAD)**

Here's a bit of history about ICLAD:

In 2002, the City of Boca Raton, Florida purchased an 118,000 square foot facility for the purposes of developing a state-of-the-art training center for police, fire and general municipal services. The purchase was made possible with millions of dollars in seizure monies received in 2001, which resulted from a 1994 drug trafficking case. In addition to the main campus of approximately 9 acres that houses the main building, the Center<sup>1</sup>'s venue will also include approximately 21 acres devoted to highly specialized field training for police and fire officials.

The training facility, named The International Center for Leadership & Development, will provide a venue designed to equip future leaders with the skills that ensure the safety of communities, states, and nations. The City<sup>1</sup>'s initial investment of \$22 million dollars in the enterprise will create an environment that will be open to public safety professionals all over the world.

The multi-campus facility will be divided into two primary public safety-training venues: *law enforcement and fire/rescue training*, and a *general municipal services training area*.

The facility and its remote campuses will be dedicated to forming partnerships in order to facilitate growth, intellectual exchange, innovation, and a new way to create strategic alliances that will ultimately deliver new services, new methods, and higher levels of professionalism to the individual citizens who depend on the public sector.

You wouldn't be reading this if you didn't recognize the need for international attention to autism safety and risk issues. The proposed conference is the opportunity for us to get together, share ideas and information, and build the partnerships necessary to address our issues throughout the world.

The good news is I met with John this month and the Boca PD and ICLAD are willing to move forward and make the conference happen not only in 2006, but as an annual event. The target is March, 2006; a Thursday and

Friday; dates to be determined. A formal announcement should be forthcoming.

What's needed now is your commitment to attend the two day conference in Boca Raton, Florida in late winter, 2006. You'll not only upgrade your knowledge and meet new friends, you can dust off the clubs for a round of golf, take a stroll on the beach and a dip in the pool, and enjoy all that south Florida offers!

Sound Good?

Then send your letter of commitment now to: [ddpi@flash.net](mailto:ddpi@flash.net)

---

## U. S. Department of Homeland Security hosts Autism Training Sessions at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Cen- ter (FLETC)

As the result of attending the American Society for Law Enforcement Training (ASLET) conference in January, I met several instructors from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DOH). Discussions about autism issues led to an invitation to present two sessions for DOH trainers at FLETC in Glynco, Georgia in late February. Approximately 35 Department of Homeland Security instructors were in attendance including upper level administrators. The feedback was excellent and there were many fine questions during Q & A. FLETC now has my training materials, book *Autism, Advocates and Law Enforcement Professionals* and the new *Autism & Law Enforcement* video for use at future training sessions.

FLETC trains over 40 federal agencies including the Secret Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Learn More about FLETC at:

<http://www.fletc.gov/>

---

## Autism & Law Enforcement Video News

- Reviewed in FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin
- Featured in Law Enforcement Product News magazine
- In use by Philadelphia Police Department

The March, 2005 edition of the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin features two reviews of the Autism & Law Enforcement video. The FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin has a readership of over 200,000, and is considered the world's leading cutting-edge publication on law enforcement issues.,

The reviews will be online soon at

<http://www.fbi.gov/publications/leb/leb.htm>

In the meantime, anyone who wants copies of the review can email me at [ddpi@flash.net](mailto:ddpi@flash.net) include a FAX number I'll FAX you a copy.

Here are excerpts:

Mary Otto, Oregon Police Corps:

"The video *Autism and Law Enforcement* provides a quick and engaging education in autism that can help increase safety for both officers and individuals with autism, as well as minimize the potential for litigation that could occur as a result of a misunderstanding. Interviews and vignettes involving people with autism concretely convey the reality of how challenging they can be to interact with and how vulnerable to crime and exploitation they are.....After viewing this video, officers will be better equipped to consider autism when assessing behavior during personal encounters."

John M. Skinner, Chief, Port St. Lucie, Florida Police Department

"My review of *Autism and Law Enforcement*, a 21-minute video, not only enlightened me as a police chief but made me immediately recognize it as a valuable resource for all law enforcement officers. The producer, a law enforcement veteran and father of a son with autism, maintains viewer interest by providing clear concise bullet points about the nature of the disability; how officers should approach an individual with autism; and what to expect as a response from an officer's field interview....*Autism and Law Enforcement* is an excellent tool that can raise awareness to promote successful encounters with people who have autism. The complexities in the mission of today's street officer demand an astute response to the differing needs of citizens. This training video helps accomplish that goal."

Law Enforcement Product News (LEPN) also featured the video in its March-April 2005 edition. We've had a great deal of response as a result. This also stemmed from discussions at the January ASLET conference.

To subscribe to LEPN:

<http://www.tradepub.com/free/lepn/>

Susan Rzucidlo, a board member of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the Autism Society of America reports that the Philadelphia Police Department is now using the *Autism and Law Enforcement Video* and handout--in addition to the Silent No More communication boards and GPC-ASA materials--to train all sworn officers on autism. All materials were provided by the GPC-ASA.

For information visit:

Silent No More Web site at <http://www.dol.net/~srz>

A big thanks goes out to the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, Law Enforcement Product News, and the GPC-ASA!!!

**Video Information and ordering** options at:

<http://www.autismriskmanagement.com/>

Inquiries? Email [ddpi@flash.net](mailto:ddpi@flash.net) or call 772-398-9756. Brad may answer the phone. Tell him Hi!

---

## Pensacola Police Department's *Take Me Home* Database

You may recall a report from the Summer 2004 Autism risk & Safety Newsletter about the Pensacola Police Department's *Take Me Home* database. The

*Take Me Home* system is available to **ALL** law enforcement and public service agencies **free of charge!!!**

Contact Crime Prevention Officer Jimmy Donohoe at 850-436-5416 or email [jdonohoe@ci.pensacola.fl.us](mailto:jdonohoe@ci.pensacola.fl.us)

Here's the report for those of you who may have missed it:

The seeds were sown for this innovative special needs assistance program when Pensacola, Florida PD Officer Jimmy Donohoe attended a meeting of the Panhandle Chapter of the Autism Society of America. Officer Donohoe heard first-hand the concerns that many parents there had about their wandering children who have autism. Officer Donohoe, also the parent of a special needs son, decided then and there to do something to assist. He approached Pensacola PD Chief John Mathis who gave the green light to spearhead the *Take Me Home* service.

The Pensacola PD worked in partnership with **SmartCOP**, a Pensacola-based law enforcement technology and software company, to develop *Take Me Home*.

The *Take Me Home* system is a database that is maintained at the Pensacola PD of persons who may need special assistance if they are alone. The system includes a current, digital picture, demographic information and caregiver contacts. If a person in the *Take Me Home* system is encountered by a Pensacola Police Officer, the officer can query the *Take Me Home* system by name or by the person's description to locate the person's *Take Me home* enrollment record. With the information at hand the officer can appropriately assist the person.

The *Take Me Home* system is designed for departments that utilize the **SmartCOP** onboard patrol vehicle computer technology. Over-the-air dispatching is minimized. Caregivers can be contacted by phone and provide key information directly to the first responder. *Take Me Home* is, of course, voluntary for those who participate.



The Pensacola Police Department was incepted in 1821 and continues to grow not only in personnel but also in technology, training and community outreach efforts. About *Take Me Home*, Chief Mathis recently said, "We are excited to share with you this new service designed to provide enhanced service and protection to our citizens. I strongly believe, and try to instill the same philosophy in others, that it is by working together that we can make Pensacola an even better place in which to live."

When it comes to the *Take Me Home* program, Chief Mathis and the Pensacola PD strive to make everywhere a better place to live.

Kudos to Chief Mathis, Inspector Wendell Rich and Officer Jimmy Donohoe for creating *Take Me Home*. Write thanks to the Chief at:

Pensacola Police Department  
711 North Haynes Street  
Pensacola, FL 32501

---

## When Words Are Not Enough

Curriculum Review by Dennis Debbaudt

**When Words Are Not Enough:** Communicating with individuals who have various physical, psycho-social, developmental and learning disabilities that may be adversely affecting communication

A Federal Emergency Management Agency-funded project administered by the Woodside Fire Protection District, this training package is a fantastic tool for all first responders. The scenes from the video where first responders and students with disabilities get together in classrooms--not only

to review the safety and communication materials, but, most importantly, to get to know each other in a safe, non stressful environment--were impressive and are an extremely important component of every good training program. It's these types of cross educational opportunities that drive home the message to students that first responders are safe "go to" people in an emergency; and helps the first responder clearly understand what the communication difficulties look and sound like while not under the stress of a field situation. Those scenes and the entire video, sent the message graphically, and should be viewed by parents, educators and first responders everywhere.

The field laminates feature American Sign Language (ASL) graphics, pictures and Spanish translations for key words including: "help", "quiet", "wait", and "friends".

Our communities need more quality programs such as the outstanding training curriculum "When Words Are Not Enough"

More Information from the When Words Are Not Enough flyer:

**Program Design:** This program is designed as an educational tool for fire department, first responders, children in special education classes and other individuals who may have difficulty communicating during emergencies because of a disability.

The **video** depicts emergency personnel using the communication strategies and tools described in the manual. There is also a demonstration of each of the basic symbols as an individual hand sign.

The **manual** with basic information about individuals with various disabilities and communication difficulties a first responder may encounter on a call involving these individuals (in addition to the manual, a one-hour training session regarding the information is available upon request).

A **communication booklet** to be used on calls when necessary as well as an adjunct to various educational presentations fire personnel provide to individuals with disabilities.

A **poster** depicting first responders as friends The poster will include both signs/icons and illustrations of first responders in action. These posters are special reminders when placed in the fire station or in the special education classrooms at schools.

**How do I order a copy for my department:** You may download or order the curriculum in its entirety including the: video, instruction manual, symbol/sign booklet and the poster from [www.woodsidefire.org](http://www.woodsidefire.org).

For further program information or to request program materials, contact Denise Enea, Fire Marshal, Woodside Fire Protection District at 650 851-1594 or [denea@woodsidefire.org](mailto:denea@woodsidefire.org).

---

## Global and Regional Asperger Syndrome Partnership

Next year's autism & law enforcement conference will feature sessions that address spectrum public safety risks and criminal justice issues. People with Asperger syndrome (AS) are sure to part of the discussions and, hopefully, presenters, too.

I get a lot of calls from autism and AS families seeking help during crisis. Thankfully, a growing number national and international spectrum groups are addressing issues of safety and risk. In the AS community, one such group, run by and for self advocates with AS, is the Global and Regional Asperger Syndrome Partnership.

GRASP chapters are forming throughout the U.S. and globally. I can't think of a better partnership than one that includes persons on the spectrum,

their families, and professionals in law enforcement, first response and criminal justice.

If you are seeking Asperger syndrome support, check out GRASP. You won't be sorry!

Contact:

Michael John Carley

Executive Director

GRASP

The Global and Regional Asperger Syndrome Partnership, Inc.

135 East 15th Street

New York, NY 10003

646.242.4003

212.529.9996-fax

[mjcarley@grasp.org](mailto:mjcarley@grasp.org)

[www.grasp.org](http://www.grasp.org)

---

## Autism Spectrum & Law Enforcement Training in Maine

With a course approved by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy, U.S. Federal Probation Officer, Matt Brown has been traveling the state of Maine for over a year educating law enforcers and first responders about the autism spectrum. Matt's delivered the training to officers at municipal police departments, as well as for state troopers, state probation officers, EMS and fire personnel, search and rescue pros, park rangers, ER personnel and special educators. He co-presents with Chris Conner, a young man with Asperger syndrome. Chris brings his personal views and powerful stories to

these presentations. Matt, as the parent of a spectrum son, also brings the personal side to the Maine training sessions.

These sessions--and the *Autism and Law Enforcement* video--have been featured on broadcast TV reports in Portland, Maine and are supported by the autism Society of Maine

Wishing the best of everything to Matt Brown and Chris Conner!

Contact Matt Brown at:  
[rmb@mep.uscourts.gov](mailto:rmb@mep.uscourts.gov)

---

## Rising Bird Productions

Teresa Soler & Brant Dutton of Rising Bird Productions of Eugene, Oregon wish the Autism Community all the best during the New Year!! They are the talented duo who created the site for the video.

Rising Bird Productions are top notch Design, Publishing, Business Services and Photography Professionals.

Teresa and Brant are part of the autism community!! Consider using them for your web, ad or graphic design needs. And tell 'em Dennis sent you!!

Check out their web site at:

<http://www.RisingBird.net/>

---

## *Dennis Debbaudt Calendar :*

April 28 & 29, Boise and Nampa, Idaho

Paul & Richelle Tierney [jrat@netzero.net](mailto:jrat@netzero.net)

Sponsored by the Treasure Valley Autism Society

May 2nd Portland, Oregon email Genevieve

Athens [athensc@comcast.net](mailto:athensc@comcast.net)

May 3rd Eastern Oregon email Donna Helman

[dhelman@orpti.org](mailto:dhelman@orpti.org)

May 5th Eugene, Oregon email Sgt. Don McGuire

[Don.McGuire@co.lane.or.us](mailto:Don.McGuire@co.lane.or.us)

Sponsored by the Autism Society of Oregon

Eugene session sponsored by the Lane County Sheriff's Office

May 11th Albuquerque, New Mexico

Sponsored by the SouthWest Autism Network at the University of New Mexico and the New Mexico Autism Society

Contact:

Karen "Cal" Wright  
Manager, Health Education  
SouthWest Autism Network  
Center for Development and Disability  
University of New Mexico  
[karwright@sulud.unm.edu](mailto:karwright@sulud.unm.edu)  
505.272.0134

May 16th Kansas City email: [ddpi@flash.net](mailto:ddpi@flash.net)

May 18th Cape Girardeau, Missouri email:  
[DSeeger@cityofcapegirardeau.org](mailto:DSeeger@cityofcapegirardeau.org)

May 19th Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri  
<http://www.dmh.missouri.gov/ada/provider/sti/05stiBrochure.pdf#search='national%20symposium%20on%20autism'>

May 20th St. Louis email: [ddpi@flash.net](mailto:ddpi@flash.net)

May 23rd-25th Project Lifesaver Conference, Braintree, Massachusetts  
<http://www.projectlifesaver.org>

---

# Now Booking Dennis Debbaudt Conference and Training Sessions 2005 and beyond!

*Inquiries? Email: [ddpi@flash.net](mailto:ddpi@flash.net) or call 772-398-9756 (Brad may answer phone) for updates, new bookings or to schedule an event. Background at <http://www.autismriskmanagement.com/>*

## **Autism & Law Enforcement Resources**

### **Book**

Autism, Advocates & Law Enforcement Professionals: Recognizing and Reducing Risk Situations for People with Autism Spectrum Disorders by Dennis Debbaudt, Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2001  
ISBN # 1-85302-980-7

### **Online Articles**

**Contact With Individuals With Autism** by Debbaudt & Rothman, FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin April 2001

Edited for Sheriff Magazine Issue March-April 2002

[http://articles.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m2194/is\\_4\\_70/ai\\_75959751](http://articles.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2194/is_4_70/ai_75959751)

Beyond Guilt or Innocence

EK Shriver Center LEND Journal, 2004

<http://www.mnip-net.org/ddlead.nsf/TrimTOC/BeyondGuiltorInnocen>

### **Video**

Autism & Law Enforcement Roll Call Briefing Video

Debbaudt/Legacy Productions, 2004

<http://www.risingbird.net/asr/email.html>

Excerpts/clips from the video can be seen at the Dan Marino Foundation web site. Please note that this is online TV and not perfect. The video itself is top quality VHS and full length of 21 minutes. Link to clips:

<http://sar.c.topica.com/maachkfaa65rEa7mHtqb/>



**For further information, conference and workshop bookings:**

Dennis Debbaudt, 2338 SE Holland Street, Port St. Lucie FL 34952

Phone 772/398-9756 (son with autism may answer phone)

Email [ddpi@flash.net](mailto:ddpi@flash.net)

<http://www.autismriskmanagement.com/>

---

## A personal note and THANKS!!

The national and international attention now being given to autism spectrum issues of risk and safety has been fantastic. Without having to lobby for legislation, federal agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI, as well as many state and local law enforcement training centers and agencies are working with our advocacy groups, forming partnerships and sharing information. This should be very encouraging for all of us.

Again and always, I want to thank my wife Gay and son Brad for allowing me to get out here and do this work. They've been behind my efforts for fourteen years and counting and I rely on them as my anchors.

Brad's acting was terrific in the video! He also had his one year celebration at work, and also celebrated his two-gallon mark with the South Florida Blood Bank. Every 56 days he happily gives blood. We're extremely proud of him!

Enjoy the Spring warm-up!!

The newsletter will be back soon.

I'm always seeking feedback, advice and information. Please send it my way!

This newsletter is sent out occasionally. To subscribe or be removed, send an email to [ddpi@flash.net](mailto:ddpi@flash.net)

Please circulate far and wide!